

VZCZCXR07137

PP RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK

DE RUEHBC #0071 2361003

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 231003Z AUG 08

FM REO BASRAH

TO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0371

RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0788

INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

RUEHBC/REO BASRAH 0825

C O N F I D E N T I A L BASRAH 000071

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 8/23/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: GENERAL ABD AL-AZIZ AL-DALMI ON BASRAH GOVERNOR

REF: BASRAH 000069

CLASSIFIED BY: Ramon Negron, Director, Regional Embassy Office
Basrah, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: REO met with the commander the Iraqi Army (IA) 14th Division, Major General Abd al-Aziz al-Dalmi on August 18 to discuss the August 16 altercation between Basrah governor Mohammad Wa'ili's personal security detachment (PSD) and members of his division. Aziz confirmed that arrest warrants had been issued for the PSD members and presented sworn statements from witnesses, including an individual alleging to have been abducted by the governor. End summary.

¶2. (C) MajGen Aziz reinforced his earlier statement (REFTEL) that 2LT Majed Nazam Mahdi, officer at the vehicle check point (VCP), was attacked by Governor Wa'ili's PSD. He elaborated that warrants had been issued against the governor's entire PSD - 14 in total. He added that a "snatch team" of 55 soldiers was on standby to make the arrests.

¶3. (C) Aziz stated that there were a total of eight soldiers at the checkpoint, an unusually high number because of the many pilgrims transiting through the area. The soldiers, Aziz claimed, witnessed the attack on 2LT Majed. In addition, Aziz presented three sworn statements related to the incident. The first was from Karim Abu Ali, the owner of a factory located by the checkpoint. Karim alleged that Wa'ili's PSD had abducted him, with the governor present, and had taken him to the governorate building where he was detained for two hours before being released. The two other statements were from a laborer at the factory and a soldier, who had both witnessed Karim's abduction and subsequent attack on the officer.

¶4. (C) Aziz said he was aware of Wa'ili's warrant against 2LT Majed, but was unaware of any others against his men. He added that he respects the governor and has nothing personal against him. In the same breath, however, he described the governor as a "fox" and labeled him and his followers as "thieves." He accused Wa'ili and the Provincial Council of working against efforts to stabilize Basrah, noting that they had all profited from the insecurity prior to Charge of the Knights. For his part, Aziz asserted that his 14th Division would remain professional and would follow the law.

¶5. (C) Comment: During the meeting, Wa'ili's integrity was called into question when Aziz received a phone call from LTC Miles, British advisor to the 14th Division. Miles had called to verify a claim by Wa'ili that Aziz was surrounding the governorate building with his men at that very moment. REO Director confirmed for Miles that the general was indeed at the REO. Thus far, Wa'ili seems to have followed US/UK advice to keep this incident out of the public eye. Thus far the governor has not gone public and has instead elected to go through the legal system. It is not clear, however, if an arrest warrant from a federal court can be served to a military officer. End

comment.

NEGRON